



WILDERNESS WATCHER

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Victories Protect Boundary Waters Wilderness

by Kevin Proescholdt

Two recent victories for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in northeastern Minnesota have helped protect this iconic area's wilderness character. The victories came in a cell phone tower court decision, and in a Forest Service (FS) decision on motorboat quotas on the Chains of Lakes.

The 1.1 million-acre BWCAW is the largest Wilderness east of the Rockies and north of the Everglades, and with 1,175 lakes is the nation's largest lakeland Wilderness where summer travel is primarily by canoe. The Boundary Waters remains the most visited unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Cell Phone Tower

On August 3rd, a Minnesota court blocked the proposed construction of a 450-foot AT&T cell phone tower near Fall Lake at the edge of the BWCAW. The tower would have required lighting 24 hours a day and would have been visible from numerous locations within the Wilderness up to 10 miles away or more both day and night.

The litigation, brought by the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, challenged the tower construction under the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA), a state statute that allows citizens to challenge actions that would materially adversely affect natural resources of the state. In ruling against the tower Hennepin County Judge Philip Bush wrote, "The affected natural resource, broad scenic views with no visible signs of man, is not replaceable."

The judge did rule that a shorter tower under 199 feet could be built at the proposed site, since a tower of this height would not need lighting and would not mar the

scenic and aesthetic resources of the BWCAW as the taller lighted tower would do.

Though the legal victory is based primarily on MERA and may not provide a direct precedent for other Wildernesses outside Minnesota, the ruling nonetheless strongly affirms wilderness values and the need to protect them from such visual intrusion.

The judge's ruling provides important conclusions in the following three areas:

Wilderness Values at Risk

The judge clearly recognized the major wilderness values at risk. "[T]he scenic views from the BWCAW where there are no permanent signs of man or modernity are rare and unique. As commerce increases, these views become increasingly endangered." The judge concluded, "The scenic views and vistas from within the BWCAW are rare, unique, endangered and of great historical significance... The Proposed Tower will have a significant, persistent and long term nega-

tive effect on the scenic views from numerous locations within the BWCAW."

Rejection of Sacrifice Zones

AT&T argued that the areas of the BWCAW that would be most affected by the proposed new tower are near the edge of the Wilderness, that on one lake other towers outside the BWCAW can already be seen, and that on a couple of lakes 25 horsepower outboards are allowed.

In AT&T's logic, therefore, the wilderness character of these areas is already



Photo: Kevin Proescholdt

In This Issue...

Boundary Waters	Page 1
Extraordinary Legacy Gift	Page 3
A Fond Farewell	Page 3
In the Courts	Page 4
On the Watch	Page 6

...and More

Boundary Waters Wilderness continued on page 5

insights from the Executive Director



"We have no money, therefore we can do no harm."
– Newton Drury, former Director, National Park Service

It appears the push for deficit reduction in our nation's capital means many programs will be taking a big hit in the coming years. Most experts believe the hardest hit piece of the budget pie will be the thin 18 percent slice of so-called "discretionary" spending.

This could be a disaster for the public lands agencies that oversee our nation's Wildernesses, but it doesn't have to be—at least not for the lands themselves. As the

old saying goes, every challenge presents an opportunity, and the opportunity that this challenge presents is a chance to reorient priorities. Wilderness programs have both flourished and suffered in better times, and they can flourish again, even during the looming rough times.

Part of the reason is wilderness programs currently make up such a tiny portion of overall agency spending that even a small shift in priorities could make a big difference. The Forest Service, for example, spends something in the neighborhood of one percent of its budget on Wilderness despite the fact nearly 20 percent of the national forest lands it manages are designated Wilderness. A relatively small change in priorities could double Wilderness funding.

More importantly, it wouldn't necessarily take more money to greatly improve wilderness stewardship; the money just needs to be spent in better ways. Examples abound of Wildernesses that once had a half-dozen or more wilderness rangers patrolling the backcountry, clearing up campsites, restoring damaged areas, and educating visitors, but now have almost none. Funding hasn't really dropped; rather the dollars are spent on overhead and on projects that actually degrade Wilderness rather than protect it.

I was recently reminded of this as I poured through records showing how much the Forest Service spent to construct the illegal Green Mountain lookout in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Seems it spent upwards of a quarter-million dollars (including "in-kind" contributions) to replace the long-abandoned structure, and the legal costs of defending the indefensible decision will likely run into hundreds-of-thousands more. Green Mountain isn't unique; there are dozens of examples where the agencies are funneling their wilderness money to activities that denigrate Wilderness rather than protect it.

It's been over two decades since Congressmen Bruce Vento and Sidney Yates started holding the Forest Service accountable for its use of wilderness funds. The positive results were immediately evident. But control of Congress shifted, and without oversight the agencies' programs again lost their way.

There are no guarantees, of course. The current budget debates could eviscerate public lands' funding, opening the door ever wider to the commercialization and privatization schemes of those who hope to control our public lands. But the status quo isn't working, and it's not going to be sustained. The wilderness community would do well to try to benefit from this situation to steer the agencies' programs toward protecting rather than degrading Wilderness. ♪

—George Nickas



The Wilderness Watcher is the quarterly newsletter of Wilderness Watch, America's leading conservation organization dedicated solely to protecting the lands and waters in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

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An Extraordinary Legacy Gift

Wilderness Watch recently received an extraordinary gift from the estate of James F. and Gail B. Curtis, two long-time Wilderness Watch members and supporters. Their \$81,139 contribution to our Forever Wild Endowment represents the single largest one-time contribution ever made to Wilderness Watch.

Jim and Gail were Wilderness stalwarts for most of their long lives. Jim joined the Wilderness Watch Board of Directors shortly after the organization's founding and remained a board member until 2004, serving as secretary/treasurer for much of that time. In 15 years he missed only one board meeting, and Gail was along for almost every one. We'll always remember the wonderful stories



Jim and Gail Curtis, May 2005

they told of weeks-long family backpacking trips in the early years into the Bob Marshall Wilderness, and the great smiles that would spread across their faces when they told those stories. Jim earned regional and national conservation awards for his work on environmental issues, but Wilderness always held a special place for Jim and Gail. Together they made a wonderful team.

Jim was instrumental in establishing the Wilderness Watch Endowment while on the Board. He often talked of the need for a place where wilderness advocates could give a gift "that keeps on giving" to the cause of Wilderness. Jim and Gail have certainly done that with their generous legacy gift to Wilderness Watch! 🌿

A fond farewell...Melissa Graves Walker

Wilderness and Wilderness Watch lost a wonderful friend when Melissa Walker died of breast cancer on May 4th at Hospice Atlanta. Melissa was a model for people who care about Wilderness and set their mind to doing something to protect it. An author, professor, and activist for civil rights, peace, and environmental issues, Melissa met Wilderness Watch founder Bill Worf in the mid-1990s, and soon thereafter she and her husband Jerome had organized the Georgia Chapter of Wilderness Watch. Melissa also joined our board, where she served for 10 years.

It was through Melissa's initiative that Wilderness Watch got involved in the fight to protect Cumberland Island Wilderness from a Park Service scheme to run motor vehicle tours through the Wilderness. Though the issue took an amazing number of crazy and unexpected twists and turns, our legal victory in the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals stands as one of the most significant Wilderness Act cases in the 47-year history of the law. Melissa's efforts didn't stop at the borders of her native Georgia. She was



Photo: Jerome Walker

a stalwart advocate who used her many talents to protect Wilderness from Florida to Alaska.

Melissa's obituary described how shortly after turning fifty, she embarked on a solitary quest to learn about America's wilderness areas. She made two extended trips to the American west, camping in Arizona's sky islands, the northern Rockies, the red rock canyons of southern Utah, the rain forests of the Pacific Northwest, and finally on a ferry bound for Alaska. Each of the two trips lasted about three months, and during the intervening winter she camped in and around the Everglades. Her account of these travels, *Living on Wilderness Time: 200 Days Alone in America's Wild*

Places, won the Georgia Writer's Association award for Best Memoir of the Year in 2002.

Melissa is survived by her husband Dr. Jerome Walker, son Richard, daughter Laura, and three grandchildren. Her family requested that contributions be made in Melissa's name to Wilderness Watch. 🌿

Wilderness in the Courts

Undoing illegal water developments in the Kofa Wilderness

As we reported in the last issue of the *Watcher*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) violated the Wilderness Act when it built two water developments in the Kofa Wilderness in Arizona for artificially increasing bighorn sheep populations. The appeals court remanded the decision to the federal district court in Arizona to determine how to remedy the unlawful developments.

Awaiting a decision on illegal lookout construction

Also reported in the Spring issue of the *Watcher*, WW filed suit to force the Forest Service (FS) to remove a new lookout cabin it built on the summit of Green Mountain in the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington. The replica lookout was planned for use as a visitor contact station.

Over the past several months the case has been fully briefed and we are now awaiting a decision from judge.

Nevada Judge upholds helicopter pilot training in Wilderness

A federal judge in Nevada has upheld BLM's decision authorizing the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) to land helicopters hundreds of times each year in two Wildernesses as part of their search and rescue training exercises. Wilderness Watch challenged the decision because the Wilderness Act does not provide an exception for aircraft use for *training* purposes and because BLM acknowledges the training will have a significant impact on the area's wilderness character.

In no other Wildernesses in the country are aircraft allowed to land as part of search and rescue training. BLM's decision has created an unmitigated mess, with at least one BLM district contemplating allowing local search and

Hearing held on stream poisoning challenge

On August 11, 2011, Federal Judge Frank Damrell, Jr. held a hearing on a challenge to the California Department of Fish and Game's proposal to poison 11 miles of Silver King Creek in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. The proposed poisoning project is planned to kill non-native fishes introduced into the stream by CDFG for many years, so that Pauite cutthroat trout can be stocked in this reach of stream. While Wilderness Watch and our co-plaintiffs do not oppose removing the non-native fishes by other means, we have vehemently objected to the use of poisons that will kill much of the native aquatic life including species that may be found only in Silver King Creek.

Since that time WW and the FWS have been involved in negotiations over what to do with the structures. Wilderness Watch continues to insist the developments in Wilderness be removed, while FWS seems to be hoping to retain them in some fashion, despite the fact that bighorn sheep haven't used the tanks since they were installed more than four years ago. If an agreement isn't soon reached, the matter will be back before a judge. ❧

Wilderness Watch has challenged several similar developments over the years, and each time the courts have ruled that structures unnecessary for wilderness preservation are prohibited by the Wilderness Act. The FS's lawyers have asked the court to ignore all previous legal precedents and to chart its own course on Green Mountain. ❧

rescue teams to ride ATVs through Wilderness as part of their training exercises.

It is interesting to note that while BLM found that hundreds of helicopter landings are necessary each year to meet its "minimum requirement" to properly administer the Wildernesses, since the decision was signed in 2007 LVMPD has trained only once for a couple of hours. Might we be so bold as to suggest BLM and LVMPD were knowingly lying about what is the minimum required?

Wilderness Watch is deciding whether to appeal the district court ruling. ❧

During the hearing, Judge Damrell appeared quite skeptical of the government's arguments. He questioned how the agency can justify killing one species in Wilderness to benefit another, and how it could favor one species over preserving wilderness character. He returned time and again to wilderness character, at one point asking the government's lawyer to put down his notes and describe what he thinks wilderness means. He also offered this: "The Wilderness Act is not about practicality; it's about poetry."

At the end of the hearing Judge Damrell noted since the poisoning would not occur this year he would take his time to review the evidence and arguments and issue a decision in several weeks. We'll keep you posted. ❧

impacted so some additional impairment is not a big deal. The judge directly repudiated all three contentions.

Cell Phone Coverage in Wilderness

At trial AT&T claimed, among other things, that extending cell-phone service into the BWCAW was necessary for safety. The judge directly rejected this claim. “[T]his Court could find no case law, congressional finding or FCC findings that there is a national need for extending cell-phone service into Wilderness areas for 911 purposes.” Rather, the judge found that “[v]isiting a wilderness area does pose some risk, but that risk exists because it is a wilderness -- users entering the wilderness accept these risks.”

Forest Service Protects BWCAW in Chain of Lakes Decision

On April 18, Superior National Forest Supervisor Jim Sanders announced a decision that protects the wilderness character of the BWCAW from proposed increases in motorboat traffic on the so-called ‘Chains of Lakes.’ His decision brings to a close a lengthy series of efforts made by wilderness conservationists since 1993 and shows that tenacity can sometimes eventually bear fruit in a pro-wilderness decision by the agency.

Though the vast majority of BWCAW visitors travel by canoe, Congress allowed some motorboat traffic to continue on specific lakes when passing the 1978 BWCAW Act. But this law limits motorboat use by requiring daily entry point quotas not exceeding the average annual motorboat use that occurred prior to 1978. Establishing motorboat quotas was a highly contentious public issue that played out over several years in the early 1980s.

In 1993, the FS developed a new management plan that contained many changes to better protect the area’s wilderness character:

- reducing overall visitor quotas (paddlers and motorboaters alike) to reduce crowding and better protect solitude,
- eliminating signs and log canoe rests along portage trails, thus reducing human-built structures in the Wilderness,
- reducing the maximum group size from 10 people to nine, and
- capping the number of watercraft at four or less per party.

But a coalition of local entities appealed the plan as too restrictive, and wilderness advocates appealed other portions as not restrictive enough. Eventually the matter went to federal court.

The BWCAW law had exempted homeowners and their guests and resort owners and their guests from the motorboat quotas for the public on their particular lake partially in the Wilderness. Implementing this provision, the FS allowed “exempt users” to run motorboats on three Chains of Lakes beyond their particular lake and deep into the Wilderness, exempt from the quota restrictions. On the Moose Lake Chain, for example, exempt boaters ran boats beyond Moose Lake, through New Found Lake, Sucker Lake, all the way to Prairie Portage on the Canadian border without needing a permit subject to the quota. This was far more motorboat use on interior lakes than Congress intended.

In 1999, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the wilderness advocates on the Chain of Lakes issue, but the FS responded by attempting to increase the motorboat quotas. Under one proposal, motorboat use would have tripled on all three chains of lakes and nearly quintupled on the Moose Lake Chain. Tenaciously represented again by the Faegre and Benson law firm in Minneapolis, wilderness advocates challenged this as arbitrary and capricious, not based on any statistical data. In 2006, the appeals court again ruled in favor of the wilderness advocates on the Chain of Lakes.

Since then, the FS has tried—without success—to find data to justify an increase in the motorboat quotas. With his good decision this April, Forest Supervisor Jim Sanders has brought this lengthy issue to a close. The motorboat quotas will remain as they were set in the early ‘80s, with no more attempts to significantly increase motorboat use in the BWCAW.

Members are encouraged to contact Sanders to thank him for this good decision.

Jim Sanders, Forest Supervisor
Superior National Forest
8901 Grand Avenue Place • Duluth, MN 55808-1122
jsanders01@fs.fed.us 🐾

Kevin Proescholdt has worked on the BWCAW Chain of Lakes issue for many years, and testified as an expert witness in the cell tower trial. He serves on the Wilderness Watch board of directors.



Photo: Kevin Proescholdt

On the Watch

Wilderness or Pronghorn Farm?



Photo: Jim Hedrick

Wilderness Watch recently let the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) know its proposed habitat development project for Sonoran pronghorn in the Cabeza Prieta Wilderness in Arizona is contrary to the Wilderness Act's goal to preserve an untrammelled landscape retaining its primeval character and natural conditions. The FWS wants to construct five new water developments and enlarge five existing ones, each with an 11,000-gallon capacity. Construction would require a backhoe, plus 240 to 360 helicopter trips to fly in equipment, materials, and personnel, all in Wilderness. The plan also calls for "temporary waters" (with up to 2000-gallon capacity) requiring frequent truck or helicopter trips to refill them. Additionally, FWS proposes installing feeding platforms and storage pallets to provide food for pronghorn, requiring more helicopter and truck trips every season.

Wilderness Watch recently let the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) know its proposed habitat development project for Sonoran pronghorn in the Cabeza Prieta Wilderness in Arizona is contrary to the Wilderness Act's goal to preserve an

This level of development, motorized use, and intentional manipulation of natural conditions makes a mockery of the refuge's Wilderness status. WW objects to managing Wilderness like a game farm even if ostensibly it's done to benefit the endangered Sonoran pronghorn.

WW supports efforts to protect and recover Sonoran pronghorn, but such efforts need to honor the Wilderness. The Environmental Assessment contains this "Action Plan" and a "No Action Plan," but fails to consider any real options to the proposed plan. The FWS should first explore heavy-handed management actions on non-wilderness lands, including the adjacent Goldwater range, and expand captive-herd efforts until the pronghorns' natural habitat becomes more secure. Poaching in Mexico and human disturbance from illegal border crossings and border patrol activities are impacting the population. Additionally, the FWS's decision to open refuge roads to ORVs probably won't help pronghorns recover. Read our comments: <http://www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Development> 🐾

Heavy-Handed Wildlife Management



Photo: National Park Service

Wilderness Watch strongly supports the conservation and timely recovery of Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, but all efforts must comply with federal and state laws, and include an environmental analysis and full opportunity for public review and comment.

Our concerns include:

- impacts to at least six areas' wilderness character from dozens of helicopter overflights and landings for several years, and unnecessarily adorning more bighorns with radio collars;

Wilderness Watch let the Forest Service (FS) know of our concerns with a California Fish and Game (CFG) proposal to land helicopters in several Wildernesses in California's Sierra Nevada range as part of a bighorn sheep capture and collaring plan.

- the lack of an adequate alternative for studying the sheep using non-intrusive, Wilderness-compatible research methods;
- the efficacy of this proposal for recovering bighorn sheep, and the risks posed to individual sheep from the extremely intrusive net capturing, tranquilizing, and collaring methods;
- the cumulative impacts of this proposal with that in adjacent National Park Service Wilderness and with CFG helicopter operations for managing other species on adjacent lands.

Bighorn numbers have steadily climbed in recent years and there are many non-invasive management actions that could be taken to further benefit the sheep without the risks or harm to Wilderness and bighorns caused by the proposed helicopter operations. In our scoping comments, we requested a joint federal/state environmental impact statement/environmental impact report be prepared. Read our comments submitted by our Eastern Sierra chapter: <http://www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Bighorn2> 🐾

Add Your Voice to Support Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness



Photo: George Wuerthner

the High Sierra with “giant Sequoia groves, sublime alpine lake basins, and the highest peaks in John Muir’s ‘Range of Light.’” The deadline for official “scoping” comments ended on 8/31, but comments can be sent at any time.

We encourage you to include the following points in your comments and describe how your wilderness experience has been affected:

- Urge the Park Service to remove the dozens of large bear-proof food lockers it airlifted into its Wilderness in the 1980s. Now that portable canisters are widely available, SEKI should cease installing these permanent improvements and remove the existing ones.
- Urge the Park Service to stop its extensive and unnecessary use of helicopters for routine management activities such as research, fire monitoring, bighorn sheep surveys/collars, supplying trail crews, etc. Helicopters are landing almost daily in the Wilderness during summer months, and the noise from aircraft overflights is ubiquitous.
- Urge the Park Service to restore the wild character of SEKI Wilderness by reducing the large numbers of commercial pack stock that are damaging the area. Research shows that groups of more than 8-10 stock cause extensive damage to trails and campsites. SEKI should choose a maximum stock limit in this range. Moreover, the NPS has long ignored the Wilderness Act’s legal mandate to

We encourage you to voice your support for protecting Wilderness in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park (SEKI). The National Park Service (NPS) is developing a Wilderness Stewardship Plan for the park’s 800,000 acres of Wilderness, the crown jewel of

limit commercial services to the “extent necessary.” NPS should limit the number of stock allowed on each trip to those needed to carry necessary supplies and equipment. Courts have ruled that items such as large camp furniture, boats, radios, and other “luxury” items are unnecessary for the enjoyment of a wilderness experience (and damaging to the experience of other visitors), yet SEKI places no limits on commercial services, allowing commercial outfits to cater to anyone and haul anything.

- Urge that all visitors compete for wilderness permits on a level playing field via a single permitting system. Where the general public is limited by trailhead quotas or other restrictions, SEKI should strictly limit commercial use. Clients of high-impact commercial stock outfits should not be guaranteed access while private (non-outfitted) citizens are turned away by trailhead quotas or other limits.
- Urge the Park Service to require strict prevention measures to minimize the introduction and spread of invasive weeds. SEKI has for many years been quietly using chemical herbicides to control weed outbreaks—even deep in the backcountry—while giving little more than lip service to prevention measures. At a minimum the NPS should prohibit open grazing on park lands, require stock users to use weed-free feed while in the Park, and require that all animals be provided weed-free feed for a long enough period before entering the parks to allow time for the animals to excrete weed seeds.

Submit your comments and/or request to be added to the mailing list to receive the Draft EIS:

Superintendent Karen F. Taylor-Goodrich
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
47050 Generals Highway, Three Rivers, CA 93271
Fax: (559) 565 4202

You can also check Wilderness Watch’s website for updates.



At Glacier National Park, History Trumps Wilderness



Photo: Gary Ludwig

Despite the objections of Wilderness Watch, two retired Glacier National Park rangers, and the majority of those who commented on the environmental assessment, Glacier National Park recently decided to move forward with its plan to stabilize the non-operational Heavens Peak Lookout, within recommended wilderness. The project includes up to 12 helicopter flights and the use of a generator. Wilderness Watch objected to the plan based on its disregard for the Wilderness Act, which prohibits structures and the use of motorized vehicles/mechanized equipment in Wilderness, and Park Service policy, which requires recommended Wilderness to be managed as Wilderness. Read more on our blog: <http://wildernesswatch.wordpress.com/2011/06/29/at-glacier-national-park-history-trumps-wilderness/>

Wild Voices: Cleaning up E-coli Pollution in Wilderness in California

By Felice Pace

When I first began hiking in the mid-70s, climbing and teaching in the marvelous national forest Wildernesses of Northern California's Klamath Mountains,¹ I was amazed and appalled to find cattle grazing in the wet mountain meadows. I questioned rangers, and they told me cattle grazing predated wilderness designation and was "grandfathered in." Logging was a bigger problem back then. I became a forest activist. Like many other wilderness users, I learned to avoid areas occupied by cattle.

Now, 35 years later, inspired by grazing reform work of the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, I think it's time to do something about the way grazing is "managed" in these mountains. Two public land watchdog groups—Klamath Forest Alliance and Environmental Protection Information Center—enthusiastically agreed to sponsor my project.

Grazing in the Klamath and Sierra Nevada Mountains is unlike grazing in much of the Interior West. Our climate is wetter. Forests dominate lower elevations. Forage for grazing animals is limited to meadows in the rocky heights and sub-alpine forests. Forage in the few dry meadows is soon consumed so livestock spend most of the grazing season in wet meadows where their waste is likely to contaminate streams.

Unlike wild ungulates like elk, which range widely, cattle ordinarily will only move from preferred locations when made to move. Because forage here is space-limited and usually associated with wetlands, responsible grazing re-

quires regular herding. Cowpersons must ride the range at least once a week to move cattle. If that's not done, bovines will foul wetlands or stream-sides.

In the old days teenagers would spend summers in the mountains with the cattle, herd them every day, and hopefully gain an appreciation for Wilderness. But now kids don't spend much time in the high country. Ranchers bring cattle into Wilderness in July and retrieve them in October. Most permit holders only visit their cattle when angry campers trigger a call from a forest ranger. Some permit holders are so lax their cows have learned to come home on their own.

Last summer, armed with newly adopted state plans to clean up agricultural pollution in the Klamath River Basin, we headed

to the Marble Mountain Wilderness. We concentrated on an area where Native Americans from the Quartz Valley Indian Reservation had documented e-coli bacterial pollution at a popular trailhead. At the trailhead we found a livestock corral and loading facility right next to the creek with a spring rising in the middle of the corral. We complained to the local ranger and—with help from a state clean water regulator—convinced the Forest Service to move the facility away from the creek and spring.

This summer I will again be in Wildernesses in Northwest California documenting poor grazing management and the resulting degradation of water quality. This time two college interns will be with me. Our strategy is to document impacts and force the Forest Service to require grazing permit holders to herd their cattle on a weekly basis. Perhaps, if the Forest Service requires ranchers to commit the time and expense to properly manage livestock in these mountains, not only will Wilderness water quality improve but many ranchers will choose to give up their permits. 🐾



Photo: Felice Pace



Felice has been a forest, clean water and wilderness advocate since the early 1980s. For fifteen years he led the Klamath Forest Alliance. Currently Felice contracts with environmental and Native organizations, engages as a Klamath River and forest activist and pursues a number of writing projects. Felice blogs on Klamath River issues at www.KlamBlog.org

and on western resource issues at the High Country News' Range Blog. Felice lives at Klamath Glen near the mouth of the Klamath River.

¹ The Klamath Mountains are located in Northwest California and Southwest Oregon. Designated wilderness areas from South to North are: Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel, Chancelulla, Trinity Alps, Russian, Marble Mountain, Siskiyou, Red Buttes, Kalmiopsis, Wild Rogue and Grassy Knob Wilderness Areas. Along with extensive roadless areas, these wildernesses constitute the largest concentration of wild lands along the Pacific Coast of the lower 48 states.

Wolves Spared from Aerial Gunning and Gassing



Photo: US Fish & Wildlife Service

Wilderness Watch helped save wolves in the Unimak Wilderness this spring by leading opposition to the State of Alaska's request to the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to shoot wolves from helicopters and gas pups in dens. Unimak Island in Alaska is 93 percent designated Wilderness. The FWS adopted the "No Action Alternative," supported by Wilderness Watch.

Although FWS's initial plan was to approve the State's wolf-killing proposal, public pressure helped the agency find its moral compass and conclude that killing wolves would negatively impact natural diversity and wilderness character. The FWS also recognized that the use of helicopters would degrade wilderness character.

Wilderness Watch applauds the agency's decision and its resulting preservation of the wilderness character of Unimak Island. Read the decision and our comments prepared by our Alaska chapter: <http://www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#CaribouFarm> 🐾

Guzzlers Don't Belong in Mojave Wilderness



Photo: National Park Service

Wilderness Watch joined with Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility to urge the National Park Service (NPS) to remove water developments ("guzzlers") in the Mojave Wilderness as part of a plan to manage water sources throughout the Mojave

In our comments we noted the Wilderness Act prohibits structures such as guzzlers unless they are the minimum required to administer the area as Wilderness. It would be a stretch for the NPS to conclude that artificially inflating the population of game animals and birds is necessary for preserving the area as Wilderness.

We asked the NPS to address in its Environmental Impact Statement all structures that fail to meet the minimum requirement standard, and to at least make all of these structures inoperable and safe for wildlife. Those that can be removed without the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport should be. All removal should be accomplished by applying the minimum requirement standard. Read our comments: <http://www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Mojave> 🐾

National Preserve. All of the big game guzzlers and many of the small game water developments are within the 695,200-acre Wilderness. All of the developments were put in place prior to 1994 when the National Preserve was established and the Mojave Wilderness designated.

Cumberland Island, a Little More, A Little Less, Wild



Photo: Jerome Walker

Wilderness Watch recently encouraged wilderness advocates to support the National Park Service's (NPS) efforts to re-wild part of the Cumberland Island Wilderness in Georgia and honor the intention of the Seashore's original vision. The NPS is proposing to end the private use of seven properties on Cumberland Island National Seashore as required and agreed to when the Seashore was established nearly 40 years ago. The NPS proposes to

remove some structures and convert others to agency use.

Cumberland Island Wilderness and is the only developed site in the general area. The NPS plans to remove the structures on the 20-acre property, including a modern ranch house with an attached carport, a shed, and a dock on Mumford Creek.

Unfortunately, Cumberland Island Wilderness became a little less wild when motorized jeep tours began. In 2004 WW won a lawsuit banning motorized vehicle tours in the Wilderness. The court's ruling was a victory for this fragile and unique barrier island Wilderness, but unfortunately a short-lived one. Soon after, GA Rep. Jack Kingston attached a rider to a Congressional spending bill carving the Wilderness into pieces and mandating motorized tours along the carved-out routes. The tours began on August 11. 🐾

One of the seven properties—Toonahowie—is located in the

Damming Wilderness



Photo: Forest Service

Wilderness Watch has challenged the escalating use of motorized vehicles and equipment on dam-related projects in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (SBW) in Montana and Idaho. These projects are significantly impacting wilderness character, turning one of America's premier Wildernesses into one of its most

motorized. Together, the cumulative effects of authorized motorized activities and proposals for additional use have caused and threaten to continue to cause significant impacts to the SBW.

Two recent projects WW and Friends of the Clearwater are appealing are a Forest Service (FS) proposal to allow a local irrigation company to use helicopters and heavy equipment to rebuild the Tamarack Lake dam and a FS proposal to allow a

dam owner to use a helicopter to airlift 700 pounds of materials to the Fred Burr High Lake Dam for a minor maintenance task. The FS's environmental assessments for both projects fail to include an alternative that protects wilderness character by using non-motorized, non-mechanized equipment as was done for almost a century, including for several decades after the SBW was established by the 1964 Wilderness Act.

In our comments we noted the challenge for wilderness managers (and the dam owners) is to administer these legally permitted, non-conforming structures in a way that doesn't further degrade the area's wilderness character. Using traditional skills without relying on motorized equipment upholds the spirit of the Wilderness Act, while invading Wilderness with helicopters strikes at the heart of Wilderness as a place set apart. Read our comments and appeals here: <http://www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Dams> 🐾

Remote Arctic Wildernesses to Become Less Wild



Photo: National Park Service

Wilderness Watch's Alaska chapter urged the National Park Service (NPS) last summer to abandon its plan to install permanent remote automatic weather stations in designated Wilderness across the Arctic. Unfortunately, NPS recently decided to go ahead with this plan, ignoring what it correctly identified as the environmentally-preferred alternative—the “No Action

Alternative.” Nine of the sites are in the Gates of the Arctic and Noatak Wildernesses and the remaining eight are on wilderness-eligible lands. Helicopters would be used in nearly all cases to transport stations to the sites and for annual maintenance. In addition to violating the Wilderness Act's prohibition on installations and the use of motor vehicles in Wilderness, the agency's decision would result in permanent human-built modern installations in what remains of the most remote, pristine Wilderness in the world. 🐾

Proposed National Forests Planning Rule Ignores Wilderness

Wilderness Watch urged the Forest Service (FS) to strengthen the Wilderness provisions in its proposed new National Forest Management Act planning rule. The proposed rule basically ignores Wilderness, even though designated Wilderness makes up 20 percent of national forest land. As written, the proposed rule fails to provide direction to preserve wilderness character or address Wilderness with any level of detail. In our comments we advocated for:

- establishing agency monitoring and reporting on wilderness character, including defining a set of “minimum requirements” for preserving the wilderness character of each Wilderness;
- requiring review and assessment of every administrative structure or installation;
- documenting administrative need for use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport;

- limiting visitor use, where necessary, to preserve each area's wilderness character;
- providing standards for the need for trail systems and commercial services;
- providing guidance for wildlife management activities to protect wilderness character and for search and rescue activities to lessen their impacts;
- requiring each Wilderness to have appropriate funding and staff levels, and staff trained in traditional skills use; and
- requiring each Wilderness to have a fire plan that encourages natural fire to shape the ecosystem.

Read our comments here: <http://www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Rules> 🐾

On the Watch continued on page 12

Brandy's Vision Has Come True *By Jeff Smith*

I recently visited with WW board member Stewart Brandborg, better known as "Brandy," who had a front row seat in Washington, D.C., 47 years ago this month when Congress worked out the final wording of the Wilderness Act.

Brandy wasn't alone in thinking Congress stingy to only designate 9.1 million acres under the Act. But that was the price paid to get the bill to the President's desk for signature. As irrepressible today as he was back then, Brandy designed and set in motion a "field campaign" to empower Americans all over the country to push for more Wilderness. The 110-million-acre National Wilderness Preservation System stands as a monument to Brandy's work.

"We've done well," he told me. "We thought we could get between 50 and 60 million acres, not including what might come from Alaska, and we've done that."

With the conversation fresh in my head, I met up with my son Max for two days of hiking high up in the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. At Goat Flat on a cloudless August afternoon, the wind chilled our skin, and we could look in awe 360 degrees, to uncountable mountains cascading to the horizon. What a moment! We could see the peaks of five other Wildernesses: the Selway-Bitterroot, Frank Church—River of No Return, Welcome Creek, Lee Metcalf, and Mission Mountains, with the Rattlesnake, Absaroka-Beartooth, Red Rock Lakes, Scapegoat, and Bob Marshall Wildernesses lurking just beyond.

Indeed, all of us should take a moment wherever we are to cheer for the 757 Wildernesses officially designated. Then we must go back to work making sure the stewardship of these great, wild ecosystems measures up to our promise to future generations. ♪

Thanks to everyone who sent a check in response to our mid-year appeal. Your generosity astounds us.

Just so you know, these organizations provide innovative opportunities to donate to Wilderness Watch:

- SwipeGood.com can sign you up to automatically give WW a percentage of your monthly credit card charges.
- GoodSearch.com is an Internet search engine that will donate to WW each time you use its services.
- Facebook allows users to donate to WW through our cause, "Keep Wilderness WILD."

Our website has a secure donate button for credit card donations and monthly giving: www.wildernesswatch.org

For more information, please contact me at 406.542.2048 x1 or jsmith@wildernesswatch.org

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On the Watch (continued from page 10)

A Better Plan for Southeast Alaska

Based on objections from WW and concerned citizens, including wilderness rangers, the Forest Service (FS) has adopted a much better plan for the long-term management of the White Sulphur Springs cabin, bathhouse, and trail in the West Chichagof-Yakobi Wilderness in southeast Alaska. The recent decision, while not perfect, will nonetheless improve the area's wilderness character. The FS announced it will dismantle the bathhouse, but re-build the cabin.

Built a long time ago at a natural hot springs, the two buildings are in disrepair. The FS's earlier plan called for replacing the bathhouse, reconstructing or replacing the 12 x 14' cabin and moving it 100 feet from the springs, and reconstructing the one-mile trail with a gravel surface. A helicopter would have been used to deliver the bulk of materials for the project, including gravel for the trail.

After hearing from WW and other concerned wilderness supporters, the FS significantly revamped its proposal in ways to better protect the area's wilderness character. Specifically, the FS decision calls for:

- Removing the bathhouse and improving the natural appearance of the hot springs concrete pool;
- Using local native materials for reconstructing the

- mile-long existing trail and 30 feet of new trail;
- Using only traditional tools and skills;
- Using no helicopters.

WW had recommended that the existing public use cabin be removed and the site restored, but the FS decided to replace it with a new one. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act allows for repair and replacement of public use cabins such as this one.

This decision to remove the historic bathhouse stands out in another important way. Unlike several recent examples where the FS has unlawfully replaced or rebuilt unnecessary old structures in Wilderness, such as the Green Mountain Lookout in the Glacier Peak Wilderness, in this case the agency's decision to preserve the area's wilderness character by removing the buildings, while first documenting their historic values, has appropriately applied the agency's obligations under both the Wilderness Act and National Historic Preservation Act.

You can read WW's comments and the FS decision on our website at: www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#WestChichagof 🐾